Iowa Department of Education Policy Public Website

Iowa Department of Education Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319



State of lowa

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Grimes State Office Building Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

State Board of Education

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It is the policy of the Iowa Department of Education not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, gender, disability, religion, age, political party affiliation, or actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code sections 216.9 and 256.10(2), Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d and 2000e), the Equal Pay Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 206, et seq.), Title IX (Educational Amendments, 20 U.S.C.§§ 1681 – 1688), Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.).

If you have questions or grievances related to compliance with this policy by the lowa Department of Education, please contact the legal counsel for the lowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, telephone number 515/281-5295, or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 111 N. Canal Street, Suite 1053, Chicago, IL 60606-7204.

Department of Education (DE) Iowa Department of Education Public Website Policies

January 2009

Introduction

The Iowa Department of Education (DE) public website is an important vehicle for communication to internal and external audiences. Visitors depend on it to provide a wide range of information and services.

Because the public website is such a valuable and highly visible platform for informing many audiences about Iowa's education system, the DE has developed a set of policies in regards to the site.

The policies are designed to ensure the DE public website follows a common purpose and theme, ensures accurate and timely information, presents a clear and consistent identity, is accessible to the broadest possible audience, and is easy to understand and use. NOTE: The following policies do not cover the secure DE website (ED INFO) or third-party web applications (Trumba, Support Suite). Although much of the information on the public website is derived from the secure site, it is a separate entity with its own set of policies.

Policies related to the DE public website are determined, reviewed, and approved by the Website Advisory Committee. Members include, but are not limited to representation from the following divisions, bureaus and offices:

- Division of School Support and Information
- Division of PK-12 Education
- Bureau of Information Technology Services
- Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation
- Office of the Director

Mission of the Iowa Department of Education

The mission of the DE is to champion excellence for all Iowa students through leadership and service.

Purpose of the Public Website

The purpose of the DE public website is to act as a tool for the DE to communicate with various audiences as it works to support the stated mission.

Goals of the Public Website

- Serve as a reliable source for timely and accurate information related to Iowa's education system.
- Communicate the Iowa Department of Education and State Board of Education strategic goals and objectives, and related initiatives.

- Provide essential information to specific constituents within the education system to assist them in meeting state rules, regulations, and requirements, and support them in meeting the educational needs of Iowa's children.
- Use current technology and standards used on the World Wide Web.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

In 1998, Congress amended the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to reflect the newly emerging focus on technology. The amended act added provisions requiring federal agencies' electronic and information technology be accessible to persons with disabilities, including employees and members of the public. The law applies to all federal agencies as they develop, procure, maintain, and/or use electronic and information technology. In addition, Section 508 of the act also assures that people with disabilities in the general public have equal access to federal government information. While state governments are not directly subject to Section 508, Section 504 of the Act prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in any federally funded programs or activities. It requires that programs receiving federal funds must be accessible to individuals with disabilities. And while Section 504 does not specifically address electronic and information technology accessibility issues, it may be inferred that federally funded state programs have some responsibility to meet the requirements of Section 508.

The U.S. Department of Justice issued an opinion in September 1996 stating that the ADA Titles II and III require state and local governments and the business sector to provide effective communication whenever they communicate through the Internet. This effective communication rule applies to covered entities using the Internet for communications regarding their programs, goods, or services, since they must be prepared to offer those communications via an accessible medium.

Usability of information technology is a serious issue for Iowa citizens with disabilities. Websites that are not designed to be accessible bar individuals with disabilities from participating in and reaping the benefits of e-government and e-commerce.

Accessible websites provide benefits beyond the community of disabled persons. The most significant benefit is that accessible websites enables users of simple technology to access information requiring more sophisticated technology. Thus, people with slow modems and low bandwidth can access the electronic content of an accessible website even if they do not have state-of-the-art computer equipment. Additionally, people with personal digital assistants and cell phones can access the content and features of websites.

State of Iowa's ADA Policy

State agencies subject to this ADA compliance shall take reasonable steps to design and develop websites and web services so they are accessible to people with disabilities as well as those without disabilities.

Agency website developers, designers, programmers, and content providers shall become familiar with the guidelines for achieving universal website accessibility and shall apply these principles in designing and creating official State of Iowa websites.

Agencies shall take reasonable steps to meet the website accessibility standards issued by the Access Board, Part 1194 to Chapter XI of Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Subpart B Section 22, under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Many items in the Section 508 standards are similar to the Priority 1 level checkpoints of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 (WCAG) developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), but there are some variances.

Any revisions to the Section 508 website access standards shall be incorporated as a requirement of this policy unless agencies are otherwise notified.

Agencies are strongly encouraged to go beyond the Section 508 accessibility standards and incorporate the additional website design techniques contained in the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

All state agencies subject to the policy shall take reasonable steps to incorporate website accessible design techniques when developing new websites and services. As existing websites and services are revised and updated, agencies shall take reasonable steps to ensure the accessibility of those websites and services.

Terms and Conditions

The State of Iowa and its agencies, officials and employees make no warranty, representation or guaranty as to the content, accuracy, timeliness or completeness of the information provided herein. The State of Iowa and the DE expressly disclaim any and all liability for any loss or injury caused, in whole or in part, by its actions, omissions, or negligence in procuring, compiling or providing the information contained in this site, including without limitation, liability with respect to any use of this site, or the information contained herein. Reliance on the information contained on this site, is solely at your own risk. The information may change or be altered at any time.

Privacy Statement and Policy

Personally identifiable information which may be collected by use of this site includes email addresses, browsing history, IP numbers, date/time stamps, methods, path, status code and size of request. The information that is available from governmental websites is subject to these principles and policies:

Access to personally identifiable information in public records at state and local levels of government in Iowa is controlled primarily by Chapter 22 of the Code of Iowa. Information generally available under Chapter 22 - and not made confidential elsewhere in the Code of Iowa - may be posted for electronic access.

Persons concerned with regard to information about them should contact the custodian of the record, which typically is the state agency or other governmental entity that collects and maintains the information.

The information collected should only be that necessary to provide the information or services sought by a requester, just as a person might provide such information when visiting a governmental office in person.

The information collected is subject to the same controls and uses as that collected by governmental offices visited in person, again subject to the access and confidentiality provisions of Chapter 22, or to other applicable sections of the Code of Iowa. You do not have to provide personal information to visit the websites or download information. The IP (Internet Protocol) numbers of computers used to visit these sites are noted as part of our statistical analysis on use of our websites and how to better design services and facilitate access to them. No marketing databases are created nor are any commercial uses made of any such data. Government agencies may request personally identifiable information from you in order to provide requested services, but such information is handled as it would be on an in-person visit to a government office.

Various other websites may be linked through this site. Private sector sites are not subject to Chapter 22. Visitors to those sites may wish to check their privacy statements and be cautious about providing personally identifiable information.

The DE public website does not encrypt incoming email, so information considered highly sensitive should not be sent through it. We use standard security measures to ensure that personally identifiable information is not lost, misused, altered, or unintentionally destroyed. We also use software programs to monitor network traffic to identify unauthorized attempts to upload or change information, or otherwise cause damage. Except for authorized law enforcement investigations, no attempts are made to identify individual users or their usage habits.

Links to Other Sites

The DE public website has links to other websites as a convenience to our customers. These links may be operated by other government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private businesses. When one of these links is used you are no longer on this site and this Privacy Statement and Policy will not apply. When you link to another website, you are subject to the privacy policy of the new site.

When you follow a link to one of these sites neither the State of Iowa, nor any agency, officer, or employee of the State warrants the accuracy, reliability, or timeliness of any information published by the external sites, nor endorses any content, viewpoints, products, or services linked from these systems, and cannot be held liable for any losses caused by use of or reliance on the accuracy, reliability or timeliness of the information. Any person or entity that relies on any information obtained from these systems does so at his or her own risk.